

COVID-19 Report – 2nd Qtr. 2021

Kiawah Island Utility, Inc. & South Carolina Water Utilities, Inc.

Because Kiawah Island Utility, Inc. (KIU) and South Carolina Water Utilities, Inc. (SCWU) share certain operational and back office personnel, the following actions apply to both utilities.

- **Late Payment Fees**

Kiawah Island Utility, Inc (KIU) and South Carolina Water Utilities, Inc. (SCWU) suspended late fees on delinquent accounts as of March 25, 2020. This initiative was communicated to customers via a bill message and posted on our website. Late fees were restored for KIU on Sept. 1, 2020 and for SCWU on November 3, 2020. The first delinquent notification letter for SCWU was mailed on July 7, 2021.

- **Disconnection of Services**

In November 2020 KIU restored the practice of disconnecting service for non-payment as outlined in the current PSC Regulations.

- **Returned Check Charges**

Given the unique circumstances affecting many customers, KIU and SCWU do not believe it is prudent to waive returned check fees. Waiving returned check fees would allow the potential for abuse, rather than incentivizing customers to work with the utility to enroll in a deferred payment plan. Also, these fees generally reflect actual costs incurred by the utility because of a check returned for insufficient funds.

- **Communication Regarding Safety Net Provisions**

As noted in its April 1, 2020 letter to the Commission, KIU and SCWU have communicated their actions regarding their responses to COVID-19 via messages on customer bills. Additionally, KIU and SCWU have posted similar messaging, including additional details and information, on their website.

- **Work Practices**

On March 26, 2020, KIU and SCWU assigned individual vehicles to field staff to ensure their ability to social distance. Cleaning protocols were established and followed by staff to ensure vehicles and workspaces remained free of contaminants. Where there was a shortage of vehicles, arrangements were made to pay mileage for use of personal vehicles. This practice is currently still in place.

Despite the pandemic, KIU and SCWU remained committed to providing safe and reliable water and wastewater services to their customers. To facilitate operations during the pandemic, KIU and SCWU implemented “work from home” policies for all their employees who were able to do so. This policy became effective on March 30, 2020. Office personnel worked out a schedule to alternate days in the office for processing payments and billing. The Director returned to the office in early April to ensure mail and invoices were properly routed for prompt handling.

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The lobby remained open for daily deliveries by UPS, FedEx, and freight vendors. Customers were allowed to enter the lobby, where their business concerns were handled through glass partitions. Business included, but was not limited to, new service tap-ins, payments, and other account inquiries.

An automatic temperature measuring device was installed in the lobby to ensure that those entering were not experiencing fever conditions. Additionally, masks were required, and continued social distancing practices were required.

While in the office, employees practice social distancing, personal hygiene, and sanitization of their individual workspaces. Field employees and others who are not able to work from home utilize best social distancing and hygiene policies to stay as safe as possible.

Throughout the above-mentioned restrictions, customers were able to pay their bills online, set up automatic drafts, utilize the payment drop box, drop off their payments in the lobby, or mail in their payments. Delinquencies are not reported to credit agencies, and payment arrangements are offered as outlined in PSC Regulation.

- **Return to Normal Operations**

Both KIU and SCWU remained fully operational during the entire State of Emergency. Service technicians were, and continue to be, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to respond to emergencies. KIU and SCWU continue to monitor the guidance and directives from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and other Government agencies. Employees are asked to continue to comply with hygiene suggestions and travel notices issued by the CDC. All office staff returned to the office full time on June 7, 2021.

The table below shows the impacts on KIU and SCWU, respectively, as of June 30, 2021.

	KIU	SCWU (Harbor Island)	SCWU (TJ Barnwell)
Forgone Late Fee Revenues	\$3,882.36	\$627.60	\$330.72
Forgone Notification Fee Revenues	tbd	tbd	tbd
Miscellaneous Expense (e.g., employee PPE)	\$2,527.00	\$232.00	\$232.00
Supplies Expense (e.g., cleaning & disinfecting)	\$10,150.00	\$883.00	\$883.00
Net Impact	\$16,559.36	\$1,742.60	\$1,445.72